Wiki Loves Earth is a photo contest of the natural monuments, where participants picture protected areas and upload their photos to Wikimedia Commons. The goal of the project is, on one hand, to picture under a free license as many natural monuments and protected areas as possible, on the other hand, to contribute to nature protection by raising public awareness.

After years of successful organisation of Wiki Loves Monuments there was an idea of a similar contest for natural monuments. The idea of Wiki Loves Earth was born in April 2012 during a discussion at Wikimedia Conference. The idea was realised for the first time in Ukraine, where the contest was held from 15 April to 15 May 2013. Wiki Loves Earth became international in 2014 with 16 participating countries from four continents, and expanded its geography in 2015 with 26 participating countries.

In 2016 Wiki Loves Earth made one more step towards expanding geography. Apart of traditional country-based contests in 26 countries, a new nomination was added in collaboration with UNESCO: participants were invited to upload photos of UNESCO biosphere reserves in 120 different countries. Most of countries organised the contest from 1 May to 31 May 2016, while some countries and UNESCO special nomination extended the contest period till 30 June. During the contest over 115,000 pictures were submitted by more than 13,600 participants.

The contest was organised in each country by local volunteers. The national juries submitted then up to 10 pictures to the international stage. With 27 nominations, the international jury had to consider a total of 270 candidating pictures. This report includes a summary of the process steps and announces the winning pictures.
**Doris Anson-Yevu** aka Kafui is a free-spirited Ghanian photographer and entrepreneur. She popularised the Photowalk concept in Ghana.

**Dietmar Bartz** is a professional archivist, journalist and editor from Germany. As an active Wikipedian, he seeks the balance of photographic excellence and encyclopaedic information.

**Isla Haddow-Flood** is a writer, editor, marketing specialist and open culture activist from South Africa. She played a key role in organising Wiki Loves Africa and Wiki Loves Women.

**Besnik Hamiti** is a Wikipedian (User:Ulisi) and a professional photographer from Kosovo.

**Qunli Han** is the director of Ecological and Earth Sciences and Secretary of Man and the Biosphere Programme at UNESCO. Born in China, he worked with UNESCO in Kenya, Indonesia and China and is now based in Paris, France.

**Jeevan Jose** is a Wikipedian (User:Jkadavoor) from Kerala, India. He contributes photographs of plants and insects and participates in projects such as EOL or India Biodiversity Portal.

**Janno Loide** is a Wikipedian (User:Amadvr) and photographer from Estonia and an active member of Wikimedia Eesti. His photo won the 3rd prize at Wiki Loves Earth 2014.

**Chris Woodrich** is a Wikipedian (User:Crisco1492) and photographer from Indonesia.

**Katerina Zareva-Simeonova** is an ecologist and works in Sofia Zoo, Bulgaria.
Winners were determined by the 9-person international jury. Members were selected by the international team: some of them were recruited by international team directly, while others were suggested by partners, local teams or fellow Wikimedians. The jury was formed to be as diverse as possible (it includes representatives of four continents and very different backgrounds) and so that no country could have more than one jury member.

270 nominations were submitted to the international organising team by the national juries of the 26 participating countries and by UNESCO Biosphere reserves jury. Each country was allowed to submit up to 10 images. The international team is pleased to notice that all countries submitted their nominations on time this year.

The nominations were collected in a judging tool managed by non-voting jury moderators. On the first stage, each jury member independently rated all images with stars from 1 (poor) to 10 (very good). 5 images with ratings higher than 5.0 were selected to the final round. One of these 54 images was disqualified as it was uploaded by a person other than author.

On the final stage, jury members rated and commented on the 53 images. Comments were visible to other jury members, while rankings were not. Each jury member ranked the images, giving points from 20 to the best picture to 1 point for the lowest-ranked one. These points were added together, and a combined jury ranking was produced. In case of equality of points in the final round, highest points from any jury member were used as a tiebreaker.
Stopića cave is a limestone cave near Sirogojno on the slopes of Mount Zlatibor in the Dinaric Alps in western Serbia and is one of Serbia’s most famous caves. It has an impressive entrance which is 35 m wide and 18 m high. [English]

Стопића пећина је једна од најзнаменитијих пећина у Србији. Налази се на подручју Златибора, на путу за Сирогојно. Пећина има импресивни улазни отвор 35 метара широк и 18 метара висок. [Serbian]

**Jury comments**

Even inveterate enemies of reflections on the water ought to pause for a moment. Dimensions above and under water are clearly seen. High encyclopedic value.

A very dynamic view. Very attractive, and the interactions between the different pools certainly keeps your interest.

Fascinating image. Beautifully framed with amazing reflections.

I believe the photo wasn’t easy to make. Very detailed and the lighting!
Pobiti Kamani is considered the only desert in Bulgaria and one of few found in Europe and is a natural landmark in Bulgaria since the 1930s. The desert consists of sand dunes and several groups of natural rock formations on a total area of 13 square kilometres (5.0 sq mi). The formations are mainly stone columns between 5–7 metres (16–23 ft) high and from 0.3–3 metres (0.98–9.84 ft) thick. There are a number of theories regarding the phenomenon’s origin. The pioneering hypothesis can be divided roughly into two groups: suggesting an organic (coral activity) or abiotic (prismatic weathering and desertification of the rocks, formation of sand and limestone concretions, or lower Eocene bubbling reefs) origin. [English]

Побитите камъни са скални образувания в област Варна, България. Представляват каменни колони с различна височина – от 5 до 7 m, дебелина – от 0,3 до 3 m и различно сечение. Изглеждат като побити в пясъка и оттам идва името им. Колоните са без твърди основи, кухи и запълнени с пясък. За произхода им има много хипотези, които могат да се обединят главно в две групи – за органичния и неорганичния им произход. Първите са свързани с кораловите организации и други. Според вторите произходът им се обяснява с призматичното изветряне на скалите. [Bulgarian]

**Jury comments**

*I like the dramatic and moody clouds coming in. Apart from it being high encyclopedic value, the atmospherics add a level of drama.*

*The front is well lit, compared to dramatic sky in the background, which do contrast very well.*

Photographer: Diego Delso (Poco a poco)

Site: Pobiti Kamani

Location: Varna Province, Bulgaria
A picture of 'Chörtens galore in Tangye, Upper Mustang, Annapurna Conservation Area Project. The Annapurna Conservation Area is Nepal's largest protected area covering 7,629 km² (2,946 sq mi) in the Annapurna range of the Himalayas across the Manang, Mustang, Kaski, Myagdi, and Lamjung districts. The area ranges in altitude from 790 m (2,590 ft) to the peak of Annapurna I at 8,091 m (26,545 ft). The Annapurna Conservation Area was established in 1985 and gazetted in 1992. [English]

Jury comments

The different layers (front, middle, back) of information are appreciated. High encyclopedic value.

Really like the staging of visual information and such an interesting viewpoint.

अन्नपूर्ण सरक्षण क्षेत्र पश्चिम नेपालको गण्डकी तथा धौलागिरी अन्नपूर्ण क्षेत्रहरूमा पर्ने नेपालको सर्वभौमका ढूलो सरक्षण क्षेत्र हो। यसको क्षेत्रफल ७,६२९ बर्ग फिट किलोमिटर, त्यसको क्षेत्रफलको अन्तर्गत ८,००० मिटर, अन्नपूर्ण हिमालहरु, संसारको सर्वभौमका गाहिरी काली गण्डकी नदीको खोंच, नेपालको सर्वभौमका बढि तथा कम पानी पर्ने ठाउँहरु पद्धतलै यो नेपालको सर्वभौंमका महत्वपूर्ण पर्यटकीय गन्तव्य स्थल पनि हो। [Nepali]
Photographer: Külli Kolina (Kylli28)
Site: Ahja River Valley Landscape
Location: Põlva County, Estonia

Winter on Ahja river at Väike-Taevaskoda, Põlva County, Estonia. The landscape of Ahja River Valley is a protected natural site. Ahja River river is 103.4 kilometres (64.2 mi) long. It begins at Lake Erastvere and empties into the River Emajögi. [English]

Talv, Ahja jõe ürgoru maastikukaitseala Väike-Taevaskojas, Põlva maakond, Eesti. Ahja jõgi on Emajõe suurim parempoolne lisajõgi, pikkus 102,1 km. [Estonian]

Jury comments

Great mood, beautiful reflections and composition.

Lovely photo. lovely balance, mood and clear reflections.

Calming and the reflection is on point.

Another featured picture on Commons. Well executed.
The old Polish Pip Ivan Observatory, also known as „The White Elephant“, built in 1938 at 2028 m in Carpathian National Nature Park. The name „White Elephant“ comes from the shape it resembles in winter when it is covered in snow. Pip Ivan is the third highest peak (after Hoverla and Brebeneskul) of the Chornohora (Czarnohora) range, with height of 2022 meters (6,634 ft) above sea level. It is a part of Carpathian National Nature Park, one of the largest in Ukraine. It is covering the highest parts of the Carpathian Mountains, including the highest point of Ukraine — Hoverla. Its goal is to preserve unique forest ecosystems of Central Europe.

Photographer: Nickolay Khoroshkov (Khoroshkov)
Site: Pip Ivan
Location: Carpathian National Nature Park, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast, Ukraine

Jury comments

Beautiful view, with great composition and nice leading lines.
Lovely composition!
Photographer: Tamara Kulikova (Tamara k)
Site: Barranco de los Encantados
Location: Fuerteventura Biosphere Reserve, Canary Islands, Spain

Nominated via Biosphere Reserves nomination.

Barranco de los Encantados (Canyon of the Enchanted), or Barranco de los Enamorados (Canyon of the Lovers) is a paleodunar landscape on Fuerteventura Island. The Fuerteventura Biosphere Reserve is located on the oldest and second largest of the Canary Islands. [English]

El Barranco de los Encantados o Enamorados es un paisaje paleodunar en la isla de Fuerteventura. La Reserva de la Biosfera de Fuerteventura se encuentra en la más antigua y segunda más grande de las Islas Canarias. [Spanish]

Jury comments

Although not sharp on the right side, the pic shows nature in geological terms, untouched by humans. High encyclopedic value.

I love almost human profiles on the formations. Unfortunately a bit overexposed and with chromatic aberrations on the edges.
Vääna River in winter. The river flows entirely in Harju County and is protected as Vääna Limited-conservation Area. The length of the river is different to the data 58, 64, or 65.4 km and the catchment area of 316 square kilometers.

**Photographer:** Kristoffer Vaikla  
**Site:** Vääna River  
**Location:** Vääna Limited Conservation Area, Harju County, Estonia

_Talvine Vääna jõgi, Vääna hoiuala, Harjumaa. Vääna jõgi voolab täies pikkuses Harju maakonnas. Jõe pikkus on eri andmeil 58, 64 või 65,4 km ja valgala suurus 316 km²._ [Estonian]

**Jury comments**

_Drone pic! Reward for giving as an unusual view of this part of Vääna River, showing trees and the creek in a landscaped feature we normally would never realize._

_Superb and unusual view of a frozen landscape. Again, the detail is not sharp._

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“”
Klafferkessel in the Schladming Tauern, seen from Greifenberg. Klafferkessel is a valley in the Sladminger Tauern, south of Schladming. It is a designated natural reserve (Klafferkessel in the area of Schladminger Tauern). It has 30 mountain lakes located in a former glacier floor. The Klafferkessel itself consists of two interlocking cirques with series of icy lakes in different sizes (the largest being Untere Klaffersee, Rauhenbergsee, Obere Klaffersee and Kapuzinersee), between rock, craggy and alpine mats. It is located in the Schladminger Tauern, a subrange of the Austrian Central Alps within the Eastern Alps. [English]

Photographer: Sergey Ryzhkov
(Ryzhkov Sergey)
Site: Tokivske Waterfall
Location: Kamianka Reserve, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, Ukraine

Tokivske Waterfall is a waterfall (or a cascade of waterfalls) on the Kamianka River (tributary of Bazavluk). It is located near the village of Tokivske in Apostolove Raion, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. Total height of the waterfall is about 6 m, while total length is around 30 m. The waterfall was formed on the red granite ledges and is located near Tokivske granite quarry. The waterfall is a hydrological monument of regional significance („Waterfall on Kamianka River“) and is a part of Kamianka Landscape Reserve of nationwide significance.

Jury comments
Beautiful panoramic scene at dusk. Well executed long exposure shot with nice soft colors and vortexes in water. I wish the size was larger than 3.5MB.
Dunes in Lençóis Maranhenses National Park, northeastern Brazil. Composed of large, white, sweeping dunes, at first glance Lençóis Maranhenses looks like an archetypal desert. In fact it isn’t actually a desert. Lying just outside the amazon basin, the region is subject to a regular rain season during the beginning of the year. The rains cause a peculiar phenomenon: freshwater collects in the valleys between sand dunes, spotting the desert with blue and green lagoons that reach their fullest between July and September. [English]

Dunas do Parque Nacional dos Lençóis Maranhenses, Maranhão. Lençóis Maranhenses abriga em seu interior aproximadamente 90 000 ha de dunas livres. [Portuguese]
The old Polish Pip Ivan Observatory, also known as „The White Elephant“, built in 1938 at 2028 m in Carpathian National Nature Park. The name „White Elephant“ comes from the shape it resembles in winter when it is covered in snow. Pip Ivan is the third highest peak (after Hoverla and Brebeneskul) of the Chornohora (Czarnohora) range, with height of 2022 meters (6,634 ft) above sea level. [English]

Стара польська обсерваторія Білий слон на горі Піп Іван Чорногорський, збудована в 1938 році на висоті 2028 м у Карпатському національному природному парку. Назва «Білий слон» походить від форми, на яку вона схожа взимку, коли покрита снігом. Піп Іван Чорногорський є третьою за висотою (після Говерли та Бребенескула) вершиною Чорногори, з висотою 2022 м над рівнем моря. [Ukrainian]
The protected forest „Wettenberger Ried“ in the southwestern part of nature reserve „Wettenberger Ried“ in Upper Swabia remains untouched since 2003. Dead trees and shrubs fall into a channel, which is completely covered with common duckweed (Lemna minor L.) Mosses, tussock grass and rushes overgrow the rotting wood. [English]


**Photographer:** Andreas Weith (AWeith)

**Site:** Wettenberger Ried

**Location:** Baden-Württemberg, Germany
Photographer: Kosin Sukhum  
(KOSIN SUKHUM)  
Site: Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park  
Location: Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand

Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park. Khao Sam Roi Yot means „mountain with 300 peaks“. The limestone hills are a subrange of the Tenas-serim Hills that arise at the shore of the Gulf of Thailand, with the highest elevation being Khao Krachom at 605 m. Between the hills are freshwater marshes. A portion, 18 km², of these marshes are scheduled to be declared a Ram-sar site. [English]

Jury comments

The atmosphere works for me, and I rather like the crown of red light given by the sun action.

The colours are not all right, but this „men and the biosphere“ pic with a mass of details leads to high encyclopaedic value.

อุทยานแห่งชาติเขาสามร้อยยอด ภูมิประเทศส่วนใหญ่เป็นเทือกเขาหินปูนผลับขับช้อนเรียงรายตามแนวทิศเหนือใต้ [Thai]
Angélica Cave in Terra Ronca State Park. Terra Ronca State Park, created on 7 July 1989, is located in the State of Goiás in central-western Brazil. It has an area of approximately 57,000 hectares. Its goal is to preserve flora, fauna, water sources and in particular areas of occurrence of natural underground cavities in its surroundings. [English]

Gruta Angélica no Parque Estadual Terra Ronca. O Parque Estadual de Terra Ronca, criado em 7 de julho de 1989, está localizado no Estado de Goiás, região centro-oeste do Brasil. Possui uma área de, aproximadamente, 57.000 hectares. O seu objetivo é preservar a fauna, a flora, os mananciais e, em particular, as áreas de ocorrências de cavidades naturais subterrâneas e seu entorno. [Portuguese]
Photographer: Vladimir Mijailović
Site: Tara Mountain
Location: Tara National Park, Zlatibor District, Serbia

Tara is a mountain located in western Serbia. It is part of Dinaric Alps and stands at 1,000-1,500 metres above sea level. The mountain’s slopes are clad in dense forests with numerous high-altitude clearings and meadows, steep cliffs, deep ravines carved by the nearby Drićă River and many karst, or limestone caves. Tara’s national park encompasses a large part of the mountain. [English]

Vidikovac Crnjeskovo se nalazi na planini Tara, u granicama istoimenog nacionalnog parka. Udaljen je oko 900 metara od Manastirskih stanova sa crkvom na Kaludjerskim Barama. Nalazi se na 1035 m nadmorske visine na 15 minuta hoda kroz šumu. [Serbian]

“Although the fog is dramatizing the scene unnecessarily, a clear view of the landscape’s composition is given.

Observe this photo carefully and see the combined effects of the fog, the landscape, and cross. Interesting.”
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